

# Forest Plan Revision Bulletin

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## Revised Plan out for public review

On February 4, the Forest Service will release a 503-page proposed management plan emphasizing watershed and fisheries restoration for the 3.38-million-acre Beaverhead-Deerlodge National Forest. In the works since January 2002, the proposal is the Forest Service's recommendation on how to restore watersheds, manage motorized and non-motorized recreation, manage timber harvest, and recommend wilderness.

"This is a forward-looking plan with an restoration emphasis. It's driven by the need to ensure viability of bull trout and westslope cutthroat trout. It's also driven by the fact that the Beaverhead-Deerlodge is at the headwaters of both the *Missouri* and *Columbia* river systems with huge wildlife and fisheries values," Bruce Ramsey, the Beaverhead-Deerlodge forest supervisor, said.

The plan contains a number of important differences from the draft released in 2005, and the public will have the chance to comment for 45 days. Along with the plan is a 1,429-page "final environmental impact statement" (FEIS) that analyzes six alternatives. The sixth alternative is new since the draft plan was released in 2005. Alternative 6 is the Forest Service's preference for a new forest plan. Here's a summary of "Alternative 6":

### Vegetative Restoration

Restores aspen on 67,000 acres  
Reduce conifer encroachment on 74,000 acres  
Increase acres of whitebark/sub-alpine fir type by 45,000 acres.

### Aquatic Restoration

56 fisheries watersheds for westslope cutthroat and bull trout  
15 watersheds to be restored to desired water-quality conditions

### Wilderness Recommendations

Recommended wilderness areas on 329,000 acres: Lee Metcalf Additions, Torrey Mountain, Italian Peak, Quigg, Snowcrest, Anaconda-Pintler Additions, north part of Mount Jefferson.

Three areas were added since 2005 draft: **Garfield Mountain, Table Mountain, and Stony.**

Two areas dropped since 2005 draft: **Electric Peak, south part of Mount Jefferson.**

Changes made since 2005 draft: Snowcrest, Torrey Mountain, Quigg, Anaconda Pintler Additions, Lee Metcalf Additions



Beaverhead-  
Deerlodge  
National Forest

February 2008

## For More Information

Visit our website at [www.fs.fed.us/r1/b-d/forest-plan](http://www.fs.fed.us/r1/b-d/forest-plan). Information will be posted there starting February 4.

Call 406-683-3860 or 683-3967  
or email [mgardner@fs.fed.us](mailto:mgardner@fs.fed.us) or  
[psuenram@fs.fed.us](mailto:psuenram@fs.fed.us)

## BRIEFLY PUT...

We've put together several briefing papers and a power-point slide program that will give you a quick summary of the revised plan. This information is available at our website ([www.fs.fed.us/r1/b-d/forest-plan](http://www.fs.fed.us/r1/b-d/forest-plan)) or we can send it to you on a CD or in print.

We also will hold several question-and-answer sessions, where you can ask planners questions about the revised plan and the FEIS. These call-ins will take place at 10 a.m. Mountain Time on February 11, 15, and 19. Call 888-820-8951. Use the passcode "PLAN."

We have set aside 50 phone lines for each call, so access will be first-come, first-served.

You can also always call us anytime at (406) 683-3860 or 683-3967.

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Ravalli County Commissioners

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## More Information



### Summer Motorized Travel and Mountain Bikes

The plan allocates 55 percent of the Beaverhead-Deerlodge to motorized recreation in the summer months, with the remaining 45 percent in the summer allocated to travel without vehicles, on foot or on bike or horseback.

For the management of motorized travel in the Beaverhead-Deerlodge, the plan released today calls for having 5,633 miles of roads and 1,037 miles of trails open to motorized use. The plan closes 104 miles of roads and 200 miles of trails.

Currently 84 percent of the roads and 47 percent of the trails are open to vehicles. The plan would leave 83 percent of roads and 40 percent of trails open to vehicles.

Motorized use in the Beaverhead-Deerlodge will be allowed only on the routes mapped and displayed in the plan.

Mountain bikes will still be allowed in areas closed to motorized recreation except for wilderness areas and recommended wilderness areas.

Within the areas set up for motorized recreation there are "backcountry motorized" areas where recreationists would find more primitive roads and trails open to vehicles.

This designation came about because of comments on the 2005 draft.

### Snowmobiling

Snowmobiling would continue in the south half of Mt. Jefferson and in parts of the West Big Hole, two controversial areas in the 2005 draft plan.

### Timber Management

People commenting on the 2005 draft plan pointed out that the timber-management ideas weren't clear. We've tried to be clearer about which lands would be available timber harvest.

The plan designates 299,000 acres as "suitable for timber production," also known as the "suitable timber base," an increase of 83,000 acres over the 2005 draft plan.

On an additional 1.6 million acres, timber harvest could be used as a tool to achieve resource objective such as to reduce fire risk or benefit watersheds, *wildlife*, and *fisheries*.

Among the tools used to sell timber is "stewardship contracting," which trades timber for work done on the forest rather than selling federal timber outright, he said.

Given the wildlife, watershed, and fisheries restoration backlog, Ramsey said stewardship contracting will be the Forest Service's preferred method for getting fuel reduction and timber projects done, while also getting badly needed restoration work done at the same time.

### The Timeline



**Feb. 2008:** Final EIS released for 45-day comment period

**Feb. 11, 15 & 19:** Call-in sessions

**Spring 2008:** "Record of Decision" released, plan goes into effect

### WHEN ARE COMMENTS DUE?

The 45-day comment period will officially start with publication of a notice about the FEIS in the *Federal Register*. As soon as we know the comment due date, we'll post that on our forest plan website, [www.fs.fed.us/r1/b-d/forest-plan](http://www.fs.fed.us/r1/b-d/forest-plan). Comments received after the due date won't be considered.

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